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THE ADJUSTMENT OF FOREIGN
STUDENTS AT SDSU

BY
MANSOUR HAGHIGHATIAN

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science
Major in Rural Sociology
South Dakota State University
1983

THE ADJUSTMENT OF FOREIGN

STUDENTS AT SDSU

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Adviser

Date

Head, Department of Rural Sociology

Date

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Importance of the Problem	4
Objectives of the Study	5
2. Review of Literature	6
Approach to Research	6
Current Related Research	8
3. Theoretical Framework	13
The Concept of Socialization	13
The Socialization Process	15
Theoretical Framework Employed and Hypotheses	18
4. Methodology	23
Unit of Analysis	23
Sampling Techniques	23
Operational Definitions	24
Research Instrument	25
Variables and Procedures	26
Statistical Techniques of Analysis	27
5. Analysis of Data	28
Sample and Population Characteristics	29
Problems of International Students	35

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Adjustment of International Students	41
Relative Importance of Different Variables	56
6. Conclusion	58
Summary	60
Limitations of the study	62
References	63
Appendix	
Questionnaire	69

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Leading Countries of Origin	30
2. Male and Female Enrollment of Foreign Students	31
3. Major Field of Study of Foreign Students	32
4. Marital Status of Foreign Students	33
5. Academic Status of Foreign Students	33
6. Foreign Students' Place of Origin	34
7. Pre-departure Information of Foreign Students	36
8. Cultural Differences Encountered by Foreign Students	37
9. Foreign Students' Assigned Importance to English	39
10. Foreign Students' Perception of Opportunity to Know Americans	40
11. SES Background and Adjustment	43
12. Sex and Adjustment	44
13. Prior Cross-cultural Experience and Adjustment	45
14. Time in U.S. and Adjustment	46
15. Parental Residence and Adjustment	48
16. Age and Adjustment	49
17. Marital Status and Adjustment	50

TABLE	PAGE
18. Geographic Origin and Adjustment	51
19. Race and Adjustment	52
20. Academic Status and Adjustment	53
21. Field of Study and Adjustment	55
22. Relative Importance of Different Variables with Regard to Adjustment	56
23. Variables Related to Differential Adjustment	61

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Visitors in foreign lands have always been agents of cultural contact and exchange. The increase in "exchange of persons," especially after World War II, has stimulated interest in the mechanisms and consequences of that exchange. Prior to World War II the foreign student was a novelty to most American campuses. In 1945, the number of foreign students attending American colleges and universities was 6,954; and by 1952, this number had increased to 31,000 (Cieslack, 1955:9 in Shepard, 1970:1). The annual census of foreign students conducted by the Institute of International Education counted 311,882 foreign students in 1981-82, 8.9 percent greater than in 1980; twice as large as in 1975; and ten times greater than in 1954 (Smock, 1982:27). Also characteristic of this period has been the growth of organized programs of exchange supported by governments, foundations, and other organizations with a variety of objectives. Another characteristic of the post World War II period is that, as Mishler has put it, "exchange programs today take place in an internationalized world" (Mishler, 1965:551). That is, prior to World War II most international students went to foreign countries for specific training not available in their home countries.

Once they acquired this training and returned home, the experience abroad rarely entered into their personal or professional lives. But now, there is a greater likelihood that exchange students will take back not only the specific training for which they went abroad but also a view of their job in an international context and they are more likely to bring their information and learning to a more accepting milieu than was the case before.

Although the need to evaluate the situations of these students has been widely recognized and some studies have been done, the issue has not been adequately addressed in its various dimensions.

Statement of the Problem

A visible and significant subset of the student body of many U.S. institutions of higher education is its foreign student population. These students come from a wide variety of cultures and as Skinner & Hendricks have put it, "Despite the variety of views of foreign students Americans may have, Americans have a common feeling that the foreign student is somehow different, a 'they' and not a 'we'." (Skinner & Hendricks, 1977:125). The foreign student is different because he/she is from culture that has different values, traditions and different codes of behavior and guides for conduct.

Meleis (1982:441) asserts that "whereas American business-people need know very little about another personally to transact a deal, Arabs need to know much more" and they acquire this information "from questions, body movements, posture, and eye contact." Encountered with a host of similar cultural differences, however, they all have to adjust here.

This study is an exploratory study which will identify and examine factors involved in the adjustment and socialization process of the South Dakota State University (SDSU) international students. Specifically this research is interested in the following problem:

- To what extent are selected demographic and experiential variables associated with the adjustment of international students at SDSU.

At the time of this study, April of 1982, there were 236 international students enrolled at SDSU, mainly from developing countries. This number has increased to 271 for the fall of 1982-83.

This study involved an interview of 106 international students on the campus of SDSU in April of 1982, and the study was part of a larger study which was funded by Title XII.

Importance of the Problem

When a student goes to a foreign country to pursue an education, he/she discovers that the familiar norms of the home society do not necessarily hold in the host society; the student is suddenly bereft of what had been safe guides for conduct. The student has to establish a modus vivendi with the host, and that is the learning of the norms, at least, that regulate relations. However, the student is not always aware of the range of permissible deviations from the declared official norms of the society. That is so because as Schild (1962:43) has put it,

1. His social location is in the periphery of society, while facilities for effective learning frequently are more readily available in more central parts of society. The opportunities of the stranger /student/ to enter situations conducive to learning are limited when compared to those of a member of society (e.g. the adolescent who in his peer group receives socialization anticipatory to his assumption of adult roles).
2. His previous learning has taken place in a different culture. Social learning builds on previous learning, on motives, symbols, etc., acquired by the learner in other learning situations. Hence a given learning situation in the host society may be highly effective for members of the society, who by previous learning in this society have acquired the appropriate repertoire of motives and symbols, while it is relatively ineffective for the stranger /student/ whose socialization in a different culture has provided him with a different repertoire.

So, it is important to know what kinds of problems the students have and how they can be taught the proper

behavior to a situation. This study intends to shed some light on this matter.

This work also intends to supplement the work already done in this area by examining the relative influence of various identified factors.

Objectives of the Study

This study has two objectives to accomplish. The first objective of the study is to identify adjustment problems commonly encountered by foreign students at SDSU.

The second objective is to examine the relationship of selected demographic and experiential variables with the adjustment of foreign students at SDSU. In addition some contextual or structural variables are examined in relation to adjustment. These include: age, race, marital status, geographic origin (Africa vs. Asia...), academic status (graduate vs. undergraduate), and major of study. Based upon the existent literature and theoretical considerations the following demographic experiential variables were selected for analysis: socio-economic background; sex; prior cross-cultural experience; urban vs. rural background; and length of time in the U.S.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The phenomenon of extensive participation of schools in international education is a recent occurrence. Similarly, studies related to this field have been rather sparse until the post World War II period. Few books have been published concerning this subject. Most publications have been in the form of individual research papers.

A. Approach to Research

There are different ways in which studies concerning cross-cultural education can be classified.

1. One type of research related to cross-cultural education may be classified in terms of the phase of the sojourn of the foreign student. Brewster Smith (1956:57) has given a synopsis of research in terms of the locus of sojourn and of effects studied, in which he categorized research in terms of (a) studies related to background and predeparture, (b) studies related to the sojourn, and (c) studies related to the post-return period. He indicates that the great majority of research has been concerned with the period of the sojourn and very little has been concerned with the pre-departure or post-return period. He also indicates that research has not paid any attention to the reciprocal aspect of cross-

cultural education. That is to say that the role of the host as a factor in the process of interaction has received little attention, and little attention has been paid to the impact of exchangeers on host nationals or host institutions.

2. Research in this area may also be classified by the problem area with which it is chiefly concerned. Smith (1956:60-62) suggests that the studies include:

a. Problems of academic, professional, and technical learning and transfer of learning. These studies deal with how to increase effectively the knowledge and skills of foreign students.

b. Problems of attitudinal learning; attitude formation and transfer. These studies focus on the transfer of attitude from sojourn to return situations.

c. Problems of sojourn adjustment. These studies deal with factors which enable the student to make the best adjustment to the new environment and yet not prevent his return. The present study of SDSU international students is of this kind.

d. Problems of readjustment on return. These are concerned with the problems of alienation from the home culture, reassimilation, productivity.

e. Problems at a socio-cultural level. These are concerned with the overall influence of the total

program of educational exchange on the societies and cultures involved.

B. Current Related Research

The studies that have been done on the subject of cross-cultural education in recent years have been mostly concerned with the period of the sojourn and factors influencing attitudes and adjustment. These studies have shown that an enormous number of variables are involved in adjustment of foreign students. A study on the adjustment of Scandinavian students made use of more than two hundred variables all of which were considered to be significant influences on adjustment. Some of these factors included the student's socio-economic status at home, English proficiency, the amount of prior contact with Americans, the field of study (Sewell and Davidsen, 1956:10). On the basis of exploratory studies sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, it has been suggested that foreign students generally go through the following stages of adjustment:

a. A spectator period, in which the student observes with interest the life around him/her but takes part in it only superficially.

b. An adaptive period, in which the student starts to become actively involved in the life around him/her, and in so doing encounters problems of adjustment.

c. A coming-to-terms period, in which the student works out a stable *modus vivendi* in the new environment.

d. A pre-departure period, in which the student is concerned with the impending transition back to life in his/her home country (Selltiz et al, 1963:131). The morale of the student is observed to change throughout these stages of adjustment in what is described as a "U" shaped curve (Lysgaard, 1955; in Lundstedt, 1963:5). The general finding states that the visiting student typically started with very positive attitudes toward the host country; then, during first year, he/she had problems of adjustment and tended to become disillusioned; but beyond a certain time he/she gained a deeper and more sophisticated insight and became increasingly favorable toward the host country. Pool (1965, in Kelman, 1965:117) asserts that "the global like-dislike dimension, which can also be equated to support-oppose, is characteristic only of the most naive and inexperienced person, that is, the newly arrived foreign student. As time passes the visitor develops differentiated attitudes toward specific Americans, American domestic political practices, American institutions of one kind or another." The notion of the U-curve was supported by a study done by Deutsch and Won (1963:119).

Although the U-curve idea is generally accepted in describing the attitudes of foreign students in their sojourn, it has not been free of criticism. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1962:41) suggest that the U-curve is not encompassing enough and does not take into consideration the individual's situation when he/she returns to his/her country. They assert that the U-curve should be extended to a W-curve to describe a readjustment period when the visitor returns home again which is somewhat like the experiences he/she may have had during the initial involvement and coming-to-terms phases during the visit.

(X) Other studies have found that overseas travelers often experience what is called a "culture shock," (Lundstedt, 1963:3) a form of personality maladjustment which is a reaction to a temporarily unsuccessful attempt to adjust to new surroundings and people. Instead of absorbing new stress successfully, the person becomes anxious, confused, and often appears apathetic. The symptoms of culture shock are usually accompanied by a subjective feeling of loss, and a sense of isolation and loneliness often called homesickness.

A number of investigators have suggested that consideration of national status may be important determinants of foreign students' adjustment. Morris (1956) studied foreign students at U.C.L.A. with the

hypothesis that the foreign student's image of America varies with the student's estimate of how Americans rate his/her country, particularly if the student identified and is highly involved with his/her own country. He found that "those who gain by this comparison (i.e. see the Americans accord their country higher status than they themselves do, or at least not any lower) are more likely to be favorable, especially if they are highly involved." (1956:25)

X English proficiency has been thought to be very important in the adjustment and satisfaction of foreign students. Deutsch and Won's (1963) study supported this hypothesis, and Selltiz et al (1963:156) found that those rated as less fluent reported more difficulty with various non-academic aspects of life. Lee (1981:7) asserts that studies done by Moore (1965), Johnson (1971), and Moghrabi (1972) all found that a positive relationship exists between command of English and adjustment.

Perkins et al (1977) found that finance is a frequent problem for foreign students which impedes adjustment. Perkins also indicates that studies done by Reiff (1972) and Guglielmino and Perkins (1975) have given support to this idea.

Penn and Durham (1978) studied various dimensions of social contact between American and foreign students

and found that language, unfamiliarity with each other's customs, and preconceived notions about each other were common problems which kept the interaction between Americans and foreign students at a low level.

Most typically the research done on the subject of adjustment of international students just identifies the factors that influence the adjustment process, but doesn't state the relative importance of these factors. This study will look at the relative influence of these factors on the adjustment process. Furthermore, these earlier studies also tend to be atheoretical. This study will bring sociological theory to bear on this subject.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous research suggests that the adjustment of foreign students involves the students' gaining knowledge about the host society and adapting to the cultural traits of the host country through formal institutions as well as through social interaction. As a consequence, it is seen as appropriate to discuss this process of adjustment in the context of socialization.

In discussing socialization, the following sections will be included: (a) the concept of socialization; (b) the socialization process; and (c) theoretical framework employed and hypotheses.

A. The Concept of Socialization

Although socialization can be broadly defined as the acquisition of roles, values, and norms of a culture, there are two distinctively different meanings of it in sociology. One point of view which usually uses the individual rather than the group as its frame of reference, emphasizes the development of the person and views socialization "as comprising humanization, enculturation, and personality formation" (Manis & Meltzer, 1978:6). The sociological tradition most closely associated with this view of socialization is symbolic interactionism.

385251

In this perspective, human nature is not something that is natural, always there, waiting to blossom, rather, it is what develops when a human organism interacts with other humans, and symbol is the basis of human communication and interaction.

Another point of view which usually uses society or the social group, instead of the individual, as its frame of reference, stresses that socialization is the individual's adaptation and conformity to role expectations, the opinions of others, and the norms and values of the society. This conception of socialization has been most closely associated with the structural functionalist perspective.

In this perspective, socialization is seen as a process by which the society reproduces itself by transmitting appropriate roles, behaviors, values, and attitudes to its members. Society influences the process of socialization in numerous ways. As Inkeles (1968:75) has put it:

indirectly its [society's] effect is felt by its shaping the environment of the organism-influencing diet, physical comfort, the density of population, the regularity of care, the presence or absence of the father. More directly, society shapes the socialization process by establishing the standard which the socialized individual is expected to achieve in physical development, in skills and capacities, in emotional expression, in intellectual and cognitive activity, and in patterning of his relations with significant others.

Looking at the problem of foreign students adjustment from this perspective, it indicates that there are some rules and regulations which the society has established for "proper" actions in certain positions and situations, and a foreign student has to conform to them in order to be considered "normal" and to function properly. These rules include eating habits, family relationships, friendship patterns, relations with opposite sex, with the aged, and so forth.

Both structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism are used in this study. However, the former is seen as most relevant to the adjustment of foreign students.

B. The Socialization Process

1. Role Acquisition

One key point of socialization is the acquisition of roles. As people mature and/or move across society and occupy different positions, they are expected to take on a number of different, sometimes contradictory statuses and roles. A foreign student may have to play the roles of a student at a college or university, a member of the local U.S. community, a member of one's own family, if married, and a citizen of one's own home country abroad.

By playing different and sometimes contradictory roles, a foreign student is faced with what is called "role conflict," which describes a situation in which

conflicting demands are placed on the individual. There are different types of role conflict. One type is role conflict stemming from role definers. There are situations in which legitimate role definers disagree about the normative content of a role. A foreign student, based on his/her cultural background, may have a different perception about his/her role as a student than that held by his/her instructors. Another type is role conflict internal to the role. Various expectations confronting the role taker are such that the individual cannot fulfill all of the obligations in the role. The foreign student is expected to learn about the host country, yet, due to his/her social position which is in the periphery of society, he/she may not be presented with many opportunities to learn about the host culture.

In most situations, but particularly conflicting ones, internal as well as external stimuli affect the way persons learn different roles.

One external stimulus is the individual's sex, which influences the acquisition of appropriate behavior in a given situation. That is, role taking is sex specific. Females are taught different things to be appropriate for them than males.

Another external stimulus is the individual's familial socio-economic status, which influences the

socialization of the individual. Kohn (1959, in Ritzer et al, 1979:122) found that "middle-class fathers preferred children who were responsible and self-directed, while lower-class fathers favored obedient and conforming children."

Internal stimuli can include the individual's interpretation of the meaning he/she will give to the situation. Internal stimuli usually refer to personality characteristics of the individuals - such as whether they are sociable or reserved, whether they have a well-developed sense of humor or tend to be serious. Such personality characteristics are seen as influencing the individual's interpretation of situations.

2. Role Transition

Another key point of socialization is role transitions. Since individuals' positions in society change and they enter new situations, the acquisition of new roles and loss of some of the old ones becomes necessary. This is especially true of people whose childhood socialization has been in a different culture than the one in which they are presently living.

Role discontinuity, which refers to a contradiction between demands of a new and an old role, is one of the consequences of role transitions. A foreign student might have been socialized to think of drinking as deviant, but

here, if he/she wants to mingle with American students, he/she might be expected to drink. In this situation different demands are put on the individual. One way to cope with this problem is to prepare the individual for the new role prior to the taking of roles. That is, to make the individual aware of expectations attached to the role and of the necessary skills to carry out the role. This is usually referred to as anticipatory socialization. But in order for anticipatory socialization to facilitate adjustment to the new role, it should be "accurate" (Thornton & Nardi, 1975, in Rosenberg & Turner, 1981:146). That is, the information should be precise and specific. Many foreign students are dismayed when they find out that the job opportunities are not as they were told by their friends before coming here. Besides, Rosow (1974 in Rosenberg & Turner, 1981:146) maintains that visibility of the future roles to nonincumbents is important for anticipatory socialization to be effective.

Anticipatory socialization can be formal (like the orientation programs for foreign students) or informal (like when a student shares his/her experiences with another student).

3. Resocialization

Resocialization refers to a situation which involves a sharp break with the past and the inter-

nalization of radically different norms and values. It frequently takes place in a context where people have been partly or wholly isolated from their previous background. Resocialization occurs, for example, in prisons, in the process of conversion to a different religion, and sometimes in the experience of a person living among an alien people.

C. Theoretical Framework Employed and Hypotheses

In studying the adjustment of foreign students, it should be noted that since they come from different cultures than that of the U.S., and since they have already been socialized in a different society to a different set of norms and values, their problem here is one of resocialization to (in some cases, at least radically) new values and norms, for which their previous socialization has not prepared them. Therefore the problems of role transitions and anticipatory socialization become very important. Socialization, then, will be defined as a process of social interaction through which people selectively acquire skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge about a group or society. In defining socialization as such, both structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism are utilized because a) foreign students mostly learn about the society here and take on cultural traits of American society through interaction with others,

is a good deal of evidence (see Barry, Bacon & Child, 1957, D'Andrade, 1966 in Ritzer et al, 1979:149) that socialization in developing societies tend to be most traditionally sex-specific, it is hypothesized that:

H₂ International male students adjust better than female students.

Anticipatory socialization assumes that by making the individual aware of rights and expectations attached to his/her future roles, the individual will be better prepared to take the role and function with less difficulty. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H₃ Students with prior cross-cultural experience have a better adjustment than those without cross-cultural experience

Life in an urban vs. a rural area is distinctly different, especially in developing societies. Access to the media as well as ideas and information about the world are more limited in rural areas. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H₄ Students who lived in urban areas in their home country adjust better than those of non-urban background.

"Underlying virutally all of the contemporary sociological views on socialization is the assumption that it is a continuing, lifelong process" (Bush & Simmons, 1981:143). If that is indeed true, then it should follow that those who are further in the process should reflect a

better adjustment than those who are just beginning the process. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H₅ The students who have spent more time in the U.S. adjust better than those who have been in the U.S. for less time

In summary socialization theory suggests that socio-economic background, sex, prior cross-cultural experience, urban vs. rural origins, and length of time in the U.S. should all be associated with foreign students' adjustment at SDSU.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Unit of Analysis

The population under study is the foreign students at SDSU who are from the less developed countries (or developing countries) of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This characteristic of the population would restrict the generalizability of the study to the foreign students from these countries rather than to the whole body of international students.

The research is primarily interested in the characteristics of the group as a whole rather than individuals.

Sampling Techniques

The sample used in this research was not a random sample, rather, a judgement design which "involves purposive selection of elements according to researcher's knowledge about the subject" (Wagenaar, 1981:88) in this study. That is due to the fact that this study was part of a larger study concerned with issues important to international students on the SDSU campus. The larger study was especially concerned with students from developing countries, mainly from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As a consequence, international students from Europe and Canada were excluded. Furthermore, since

some countries were represented by many students (Iran, Jordan), only a sample of students from such countries were selected (by selecting every other name of students from such countries in an alphabetical order); and since some countries had very few students representing them, all students from such countries were included. In all, 106 international students which constituted 45 percent of the international student population of SDSU were interviewed.

Operational Definitions

Foreign student: Any student classified by the Department of Immigration as a non-immigrant alien.

Adjustment: The adaptation of the foreign student to the social and cultural patterns of the United States, as identified by responses to questions 13, 14, 20, and 23 of card two (see Appendix, page 69).

Sex: Self-identification as either male or female.

Urban area: Based upon student's response to question #22 of card two and identification of "home" as in an urban or non-urban area.

SES: Father's education and occupation were rated on a three point scale, separately. The numbers were added to come up with a single number indicating the SES.

In classifying occupational status, a modified version of Alba Edwards' scale (1943 in Abrahamson et al, 1976:191) was used in which professionals and governmental ministers were ranked high, managers and owners of business were ranked medium, and manual laborers and farmers were ranked low.

Furthermore, it has been found by Inkeles and Rossi (1966 in Abrahamson et al, 1976:194) that occupational rankings were generally similar in industrial and non-industrial societies. Although cultural differences might account for specific variations in occupational ratings, they were generally similar.

As for education, those with graduate or professional level of school were ranked high, those with college education were ranked medium, and secondary or less levels of education were rated low.

Research Instrument

The method of gathering data was a structured questionnaire (to permit easy comparability), administered via personal interviewing. This was done because the population was not too big and because it insured sufficient responses by minimizing language barriers.

The interview contained two basic sections. The first section involved pertinent facts related to the history and background of the individual respondents.

They included sex, age, home country, field of study, and marital status. The second portion contained questions related to various aspects of the process of adjustment. This section included questions pertaining to a) pre-departure knowledge of U.S., b) sources of financial support, c) relationships with faculty, students, and community, d) evaluation of interpersonal relationships, and the sojourn experience.

Variables and Procedures

In studying the adjustment of foreign students, such variables as sex, parental residence, SES background, prior cross-cultural experience, time in U.S. are to be used as independent variables and adjustment as the dependent variable.

Adjustment is measured in terms of interpersonal experiences. Items #13, #14, #20, and #23 of card two (see Appendix, page 69) were used to construct an adjustment score.

These items were used because they dealt with the interaction of foreign students with other students and the members of the community and could be taken as indication of their involvement and social adjustment. Similar items have been used in other studies dealing with foreign students and their problems. For example, Selltiz et al, 1963:126-132 considered among other things, association with members of the host country, morale and

satisfaction, and achievement of goals as indicators of adjustment.

The adjustment score consisted of three five-point items and one six-point item. The adjustment score had a range from 4 to 21. In the use of this score, a value of one (those falling between 4 through 9 on the score) was assigned to indicate low adjustment, and a value of two (those falling between 10 through 15) to indicate medium adjustment and a value of three (those falling between 16 through 21) to indicate high adjustment.

Statistical Analysis

Two kinds of statistical analyses were employed in this study: Chi square and Spearman rho.

a. Chi square, symbolized as χ^2 , is a nonparametric test of significance which shows the association between independent variable(s) and dependent variable(s). It does not, however, show how strongly they are related. The rationale for using this was that it has a descriptive characteristic, that is to say that it answers such questions as "How likely is it that two characteristics are different?" Another characteristic of chi square is that no assumptions are necessary about the shape of the parameter distributions and two or more differences can be evaluated at the same time.

A chi square test compares proportions actually observed with proportions expected to see if they are significantly different.

b. Spearman rho shows the correlation between variables. It is utilized in this study because it is a nonparametric correlation, which means that no assumptions are made about the distribution of cases on the variables. It also summarizes the strength of association between a pair of variables, and requires nothing more than an ordinal level of measurement.

The level of statistical significance employed in testing the hypotheses of the present research is .05. It is felt that the .05 level is generally acceptable for performing such statistical tests as the chi square and Spearman rho.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section consists of four parts: A. Sample and population characteristics, in which the composition of the sample of foreign students used in this study will be compared to the population of foreign students at SDSU and to that of the total foreign student population enrolled in the institutions of higher education throughout the U.S.; B. Problems of international students, in which some of the problems common to foreign students will be discussed (first objective of the study); C. The adjustment of international students, in which some of the variables related to the adjustment of foreign students will be considered and an assessment of the proposed hypotheses will be made; D. Relative importance of different variables, in which the relative importance of different variables in relation to adjustment will be determined.

A. Sample and Population Characteristics

This study is an effort to identify and examine some of the problems foreign students encounter in their sojourn here. The following discussion is a description of the sample used in this study in comparison with the foreign student population at SDSU and in the U.S.

Leading Countries of Origin, Table 1 shows the six leading countries of origin of international students in the sample, and compares them with the leading countries of origin of foreign students at SDSU and in the U.S.

Table 1
Leading Countries of Origin

SDSU Sample		SDSU Population	U.S.*
Iran	(26) 24.5	Iran (58) 24.5	Iran (35860) 11
Jordan	(7) 6.5	Jordan (26) 11	Taiwan (20520) 6
India	(6) 5.7	Rep. of China (13) 5.5	Nigeria (19560) 6
Saudi Arabia	(4) 3.8	Saudi Arabia (12) 5	Canada (14950) 4.5
Kuwait	(6) 5.6	Kuwait (12) 5	Japan (14020) 4.3
Botswana	(8) 7.5	Botswana (10) 4.2	Venezuela (13960) 4.2

*Institute of International Education, News letter;
Oct. 19, 1982.

As it can be seen, the SDSU sample and the foreign student population at SDSU are not representative of the whole foreign student population in the U.S. In fact, except Iran, the other leading countries are not represented by many students on the SDSU campus. A possible reason for this discrepancy could be the anonymity of South Dakota in foreign countries. Another reason for this discrepancy relates to the sampling strategy employed. That is, since this study was part of a larger study which was concerned with students from less developed countries, students from more developed countries, such as Canada and Japan,

were excluded. The sampling procedure is also responsible for the discrepancies between SDSU sample and SDSU population, which are (according to Table 1) slight.

Sex. Table 2 compares the percent of foreign students in SDSU sample with all foreign students at SDSU and in the U.S. on the basis of sex.

Table 2
Male and Female Enrollment of
Foreign Students

Sex	SDSU Sample	SDSU Population	U.S.
Male	84	88	71
Female	16	12	29

Table 2 indicates that female students are under-represented at all three levels, but this underrepresentation is more drastic in SDSU. There is little difference in the percentage of female students included in the SDSU sample and in the SDSU population.

Major Field of Study. Table 3 shows the percent of foreign students in the SDSU sample and compares it with the percent in SDSU population and in the U.S., based on the major field of study. In this regard, engineering, biological and agricultural sciences, health, and the like are categorized as "Natural sciences and Engineering" and social sciences, humanities, arts, and the like, are categorized as "Social Sciences and Humanities."

Table 3
Major Field of Study of Foreign Students

Major	SDSU Sample	SDSU Population	U.S.*
Natural Sciences and Engineering	87	88.5	62
Social Sciences and Humanities	13	11.5	20

*The reason that the percentages don't add up to 100 is that there are many students who are attending intensive English language classes, and many others are in "non-degree" or "practical training" programs.

Table 3 indicates that the majority of foreign students are in the so-called "Natural sciences and Engineering". This is especially true at SDSU where about 88.5 percent of foreign students are in those sciences and only 11.5 percent of the students are in "Social sciences and humanities". One reason for this wide difference could be traced to national origin. A large percentage of these students are from developing countries (in case of this study, the whole sample is from developing countries) where national policies and priorities stress scientific study rather than social sciences and humanities. In addition, a humanities student might not be so attracted to SDSU as an agriculture student might be because of the nature of SDSU as an agriculturally-oriented land-grant institution.

Marital Status. Table 4 shows the distribution of foreign students at SDSU and in the U.S. by marital status.

Table 4
Marital Status of Foreign Students

Marital Status	SDSU Sample	U.S.
Single	69.5	79.3
Married	30.5	20.7

Table 4 indicates that the overwhelming majority of foreign students are single, About 69.5 percent of SDSU foreign students and 79.3 percent of them at the national level are single. However, the percentage of married foreign students at SDSU (30.5) is higher than that of the national level (20.7).

Academic status. Table 5 demonstrates the distribution of foreign students in the SDSU sample in comparison to the foreign student populations at SDSU and in U.S. by their academic status.

Table 5
Academic Status of Foreign Students

Academic Status	SDSU Sample	SDSU Population	U.S.
Undergraduate	61.3	67	67.5
Graduate	38.7	33	32.5

Table 5 indicates that the majority of students in SDSU, 67 percent, and in the U.S., 67.5 percent are undergraduate. That percentage is a little less for SDSU sample, 61.3 percent.

Place of Origin. Table 6 shows the distribution of foreign students in the SDSU sample and compares it with the foreign student populations at SDSU and in the U.S. on the basis of their place of origin.

Table 6
Foreign Students' Place of Origin*

Place of Origin	SDSU Sample	SDSU Population	U.S.
Asia	68.9	74.5	55.2
Africa	25.5	17	12.8
Latin America	1.9	.8	17

*The reason that the percentages don't add up to 100 is that there were some students from other countries that were not included, like Canada.

Table 6 indicates that the largest portion of foreign students at SDSU and at the national level came from Asia. About 74.5 percent of them at SDSU are Asians. Africa is next with 17 percent at SDSU and 12.8 percent at the national level. Latin American students make up for 17 percent of foreign students at the national level, but for only 1.9 percent at SDSU. One reason for this discrepancy could be related to SDSU developmental work in Africa while some others are more involved in Latin America.

Summary-Sample and Population Characteristics

Few differences have been noted between the sample and population of foreign students at SDSU. Some differences

however, have been observed between the SDSU foreign student population and the foreign student population in the U.S. As a consequence, caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings of this study to be experiences of foreign students in the U.S. In terms of characteristics of SDSU foreign students, the following has been observed: SDSU foreign students tend to be drawn primarily from developing countries in Asia and Africa; the proportion of male foreign students far exceed that of female foreign students; most SDSU foreign students are majoring in the natural sciences and engineering (as opposed to the social sciences and humanities); somewhat more than two-thirds of these foreign students are single; and somewhat less than two-thirds are undergraduates.

B. Problems of International Students

In this section, some of the problems common to foreign students as revealed by this study will be discussed.

Problems in pre-departure information/preparation

The respondents were asked to indicate the amount of information they had about the U.S., and the way of life here. Table 7 shows the number and percent of students with different levels of information.

Table 7
Pre-departure Information of
Foreign Students

Level of Information	Number	Percent
Great deal	15	14.2
Some	58	54.7
Little or No	32	30.2
1 missing case		

Table 7 indicates that 54.7 percent of students have some knowledge and 30.2 percent have little or no knowledge prior to their visit. Taking them together, it shows that about 85 percent of the foreign students don't have very much knowledge before coming here. Furthermore, based on the personal experience of the researcher as a participant observer, one might question the accuracy of that prior information since most of the students get their information from friends, magazines, and movies, and that this kind of information is usually inaccurate and biased. This idea is supported by the relationship that was observed between adjustment and pre-departure knowledge about the U.S. Virtually no differences were noted. For example, of those with some or much prior knowledge, about 17.8 percent had low adjustment and 18.8 percent of those with little or no knowledge also had low adjustment.

Problems encountered in relation to social and cultural differences. The students were asked to indicate cultural and/or social differences that they have encountered between their country and the U.S. Table 8 shows the number and percent of students on different matters of cultural differences.

Table 8
Cultural Differences Encountered by
Foreign Students

Differences	Number	Percent
Male/female relationships	32	30.5
Family relationships	23	21.9
Individualism	18	17.2
American Habits	12	11.4
Open Society	11	10.5
Religion	7	6.7
Drinking	2	1.9
1 Missing value		

Table 8 indicates that the difference observed by the greatest number of foreign students (32) was the relationships between males and females. The students asserted that females here are more liberated and enjoy more independence and equality and have more opportunities open to them. Family relationships ranked second, that is, 21.9 percent of the students thought family relationships are different. They contended that the relationships among family members are less formal here and that children enjoy more independence and individuality. Family members are seen as not very attached to each other, and

there is not as much love observed as it is in their home countries. Then came the problem of individualism which 17.2 percent thought is a difference between here and their home country. To these students, people here seem to look after and fight just for themselves, and people seem to be apart from each other. On the other hand, people here have more individual freedom and can do what they want. About 11.4 percent of the students thought American food and greeting habits were different from theirs. People here do not go to each other's home to visit very often. About 10.5 percent thought that the society is more open here and people can do more things without being looked down on. Religion was also considered to be a problem by 6.7 percent who thought that religion is not as strict here as it is in their countries and that people are not very observant of the religious beliefs, and that many are religious just on Sundays. Drinking was at the bottom of the list. Only 1.9 percent thought drinking to be a cultural difference or problem.

Language Obstacle. The respondents were asked about how much of an obstacle English language proficiency was for them. Table 9 shows the students' responses.

Table 9
Foreign Students' Assigned Importance
to English

Degree of Hindrane	Number	Percent
Major obstacle	12	11.3
Somewhat an obst.	29	27.4
Little or no obst.	64	60.4
1 Missing case		

Table 9 indicates that 11.3 percent of the students felt that their English proficiency was a major obstacle to their adjustment, and 27.4 percent thought it was to some moderate extent an obstacle. But more than half (60.4 percent) thought that their language skills presented little or no obstacle to adjustment. This observation contradicts the findings of Shepard (1970:142) who found that "language skills also stand out as being a distinct factor in determining ease of adjustment. Three-fourths of those reporting serious difficulties in acculturation indicated inadequacies in English proficiency."

Opportunities to Know Americans. The students were asked to indicate how much opportunity they thought they had to get to know Americans and make friends. Table 10 demonstrates the number and percent of foreign students regarding their perception of opportunity to know Americans.

Table 10
Foreign Students' Perception of Opportunity to Know Americans

<u>Amount of Opportunity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Great deal	26	24.5
Some	43	40.6
Little or No	36	33.9
1 Missing case		

Table 10 indicates that 24.5 percent of the students thought there was a great deal of opportunity to know Americans. About 40.6 percent of them asserted that there was some opportunity, and 33.9 percent thought there was little or no opportunity to know Americans. Some of the reasons given by those who thought there was little or no opportunity circled around the ideas that people are prejudiced toward anybody who is not familiar or that people are conservative and reserved and tend not to socialize with the "outsiders" or that everybody seems to be busy with his/her own life.

Summary-Problems of International Students

Many of the international students at SDSU reported that they had only a moderate amount or little knowledge of life in the U.S. before coming here to study. Perhaps, as a consequence of this limited knowledge, they reported encountering many social and cultural differences which have proven problematic for them. Most prominent among these differences were those involving

personal relationships between females and males as well as among family members. Individualism and the degree of openness in American society also were frequently cited as noticeable and problematic differences by many of the students interviewed. Language was not seen as a major barrier by many of the students in this study. Almost two-thirds reported that their proficiency in English was such that it made for little or no obstacle in their adjustment to life here. On the other hand, many of the international students reported limited opportunities for getting to know Americans. Many of those interviewed attributed this limitation to Americans' reservedness in relation to foreigners.

C. The Adjustment of International Students

This section responds to the second objective of the study as well as to the hypotheses. That is, some variables related to the adjustment of foreign students will be considered and an assessment of the proposed hypotheses will be made.

Background, experiential, and contextual variables will be examined as they effect the ease and difficulty of adjustment. These variables include: students' SES background, sex, prior cross-cultural experience, time in the U.S., parental residence, age, marital status, geographic origin, race, academic status, major of study.

Students' SES Background. As it was mentioned before (see page 20) socio-economic status is known to have an impact on the socialization process, particularly the values and norms to which individuals are socialized. Based on the relationships between socio-economic status and socialization, it was hypothesized that "students of a high SES background adjust better than those of low SES." For purposes of statistical analysis, the following null hypothesis is considered:

There is no difference by SES in the level of adjustment of foreign students.

The data in Table 11 shows the relationships between SES background and ease of adjustment of foreign students involved in the study.

Although significance is not achieved, Table 11 suggests that a reverse relationship (to the one hypothesized) exists. That is, while only 11.1 percent of students from low SES reported having low adjustment, about 18.6 percent of those with medium SES and 33.3 percent of those with high SES reported having low adjustment. On the other hand, while 40.7 percent of students with low SES had high adjustment, about 24.3 percent of those with medium SES and zero percent of those with high SES had high adjustment. Of course caution must be exercised in interpreting these findings since relatively

few students were classified as "high SES." These data indicate that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 11
SES Background and Adjustment

Level of SES	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Low	(3) 11.1	(13) 48.1	(11) 40.7
Medium	(13) 18.6	(40) 57.1	(17) 24.3
High	(3) 33.3	(6) 66.7	(0) 0

$$\chi^2 = 7.0$$

$$df = 4$$

Sex. Since there is a good deal of evidence that socialization in developing societies tends to be most traditionally sex specific (page 20), it was hypothesized that "International male students adjust better than female students." However, Shepard (1970:135) in his study of foreign students in the South found that "no significant distinctions can be made concerning adaptation on the basis of sex." For purposes of statistical analysis the following null hypothesis is considered:

There is no difference in adjustment of
foreign students by sex

Table 12 presents the data on the relationship between sex and adjustment of the foreign students involved in the study.

Table 12
Sex and Adjustment

Sex	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Male	(18) 20.2	(50) 56.2	(21) 23.6
Female	(1) 5.9	(9) 52.9	(7) 41.2

$$\chi^2 = 3.33$$

$$df = 2$$

The data presented in Table 12 indicate that even though statistical significance was not achieved, female students have a better adjustment than males. While 20.2 percent of males had low adjustment, just 5.9 percent of females reported low adjustment, and about 41.2 percent of females had high adjustment as compared to 23.6 percent of male students. Little difference is observed in the medium level of adjustment between males (56.2 percent) and females (52.9 percent). However, it should be noted that the small number of females in the sample might have a bearing on these findings. The data in Table 12 indicate that the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Prior Cross-Cultural Experience. Anticipatory socialization assumes that by making the individual aware of rights and expectations attached to his/her future roles, the individual will be better prepared to take the role and function with less difficulties. Therefore, it was hypothesized that "students with prior

cross-cultural experience have a better adjustment than those without a cross-cultural experience." For purposes of statistical analysis the following null hypothesis is considered:

There is no difference in the level of adjustment of foreign students based on cross-cultural experience.

Table 13 shows the relationships between adjustment and prior cross-cultural experience.

Table 13
Prior Cross-Cultural Experience and Adjustment

Prior cross-cultural exp.	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Yes	(11) 16.9	(37) 56.9	(17) 26.2
No	(8) 20	(21) 52.5	(11) 27.5

$$\chi^2 = .234$$

$$df = 2$$

The data presented in Table 13 indicate that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The table shows that there is no statistically significant difference in adjustment between those with and those without prior cross-cultural experience. Selltitz et al's (1963:75) findings support the idea that prior cross-cultural experience effects adjustment. He found that "those who had traveled outside their own country, even briefly, before coming to the United States, associated more with Americans than those who had never before been in a foreign country."

Selltiz's findings contradict the findings of this study. It is suggested that there is a need to look into varying amounts of prior experience and varying kinds of prior cross-cultural experience.

Time in the U.S. Since socialization is a continuous process, it was assumed that those who are further in the process should reflect a better adjustment. Therefore, it was hypothesized that "the students who have spent more time in the U.S. adjust better than those who have not." For purposes of statistical analysis the following null hypothesis is considered:

There is no difference in the level of adjustment of foreign students based on time in the U.S.

Table 14 shows the relationship between adjustment and time in the U.S.

Table 14
Time in U.S. and Adjustment

Time in U.S.	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
1 or 2 years	(7) 16.7	(25) 59.5	(10) 23.8
3 or 4 years	(9) 19.6	(27) 58.7	(10) 21.7
5 or more	(3) 16.7	(7) 38.9	(8) 44.4

$$\chi^2 = 3.924$$

$$df = 4$$

The data presented in Table 14 do not permit a rejection of the null hypothesis. The data in Table 14

indicate that those with 1 or 2 years in the U.S. are much like those with 3 or 4 years in the U.S., but those who have been here 5 years or more seem to have somewhat better levels of adjustment, particularly when those who achieve medium and high levels of adjustment are compared. Furthermore, the data support, to some extent, the idea of the U-curve, which was discussed in the review of literature (see page 9). That is, 16.7 percent of the findings in their first two years reported as having low adjustment. This percentage increased (19.6 percent) with regard to those who have been here 3 or 4 years, and then it decreased with regard to those with 5 or more years. These relationships, however, are not statistically significant, and therefore indicate a rejection of the original hypothesis.

Parental Residence. Since life in an urban area, especially in developing countries, makes access to the media as well as ideas and information about the world possible and/or easier, it was hypothesized that "students who lived in urban areas in their home countries adjust better than those of non-urban background." For purposes of statistical analysis, the following null hypothesis would be considered:

There is no difference in the level of adjustment of foreign students based on parental residence.

Table 15 shows the relationship between adjustment and parental residence.

Table 15
Parental Residence and Adjustment

Parental Residence	Adjustment	
	Low	Medium High
Urban	(13) 15.1	(48) 55.8
Rural	(6) 30	(11) 55
	(25) 29.1	(3) 15

$$\chi^2 = 3.223$$

$$df = 2$$

Although statistical significance was not achieved, the data presented in Table 15 indicate that students from an urban background had a better adjustment. About 15.1 percent of those from urban background had low adjustment as compared to 30 percent of those from rural background. It also indicates that while 29.1 percent of those with urban background reported high adjustment, only 15 percent of those who lived in rural areas had high adjustment. The data in Table 15, however, do not permit rejection of the null hypothesis.

Demographic and Experiential Factors

In this section, some demographic and experiential factors will be considered in relation to adjustment of foreign students.

Age. Table 16 shows the number and percentage of students in different age categories and their level of adjustment.

Table 16
Age and Adjustment

Age	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
18-22	(8) 24.2	(19) 57.6	(6) 18.2
23-30	(9) 15.5	(32) 55.2	(17) 29.3
30-over	(2) 13.3	(8) 53.3	(5) 33.3

$$\chi^2 = 2.44$$

$$df = 4$$

Table 16 indicates that older students have a better adjustment than younger ones. However, the differences here are not statistically significant. About 24.2 percent of those between 18-22 had low adjustment while only 13.3 percent of those 30 years of age or more had low adjustment. On the other hand, 18.2 percent of students in the 18-22 category had high adjustment in comparison with 33.3 percent of those 30 years old or older. Plus it can be seen that as age increases, the percent of those with low adjustment decreases and that of high adjustment increases. One reason for this could be that those over 23 years of age are usually graduate students who have spent more time here and have gained a better and more sophisticated knowledge of the culture and society, as was suggested by the U-curve. This gives some support to the idea presented before (page 21) that socialization is a continuous process and those who are further in the process should reflect a better adjustment than those who are just beginning the process. Another possible reason

could be that older students have less difficulty because these students are "more mature and more specialized in their interests...., such people may be more selective in their choice of companions - looking for others with similar interest." (Selltitz et al, 1963:119).

Marital Status. Table 17 shows the relationships between marital status of the students and their adjustment.

Table 17
Marital Status and Adjustment

Marital Status	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Single	(14) 19.2	(38) 52.1	(21) 28.8
Married	(5) 15.6	(20) 62.2	(7) 21.9

$$x^2 = .99$$

$$df = 2$$

Table 17 indicates that adjustment varies little by marital status. About 28.8 percent of single students had high adjustment while the percent of married students who had high adjustment was 21.9. No significant differences in adjustment are found here.

Geographic Origin. As it was mentioned in the review of literature, it has been suggested that considerations of place of origin of a student may have some effect on his/her adjustment (see Morris, 1960, Selltitz et al; 1963). Table 18 shows the number and percent of foreign students from different parts of the world and their levels of adjustment.

Table 18
Geographic Origin and Adjustment

Place of Origin	Adjustment					
	Low		Medium		High	
Asia	(16)	21.9	(43)	58.9	(14)	19.2
Africa	(3)	11.1	(14)	51.9	(10)	37
Latin America	(0)	0	(0)	0	(2)	100

$$\chi^2 = 11.31$$

$$df = 6$$

Table 18 indicates that, in general, African students have a better adjustment than Asians. The data on Latin Americans can not be regarded as very meaningful due to the very small number of students (2 Latin Americans). Less African students (11.1 percent) had low adjustment than Asians (21.9 percent) and more African students (37 percent) had high adjustment than Asians (19.2 percent). None of these differences, however, achieved statistical significance.

The findings of this study on adjustment based on region of origin, contradicts those of Shepard (1970: 136) who found that "African students indicated that a larger percentage of their number had difficulty in adjustment than those from any other region (36 percent)."

It should be recalled, however, that Shepard's study was done in the South in the late 1960's (dissertation completed in Mississippi in 1970) -- at a time and in a location where racial tensions were greater than what they are in this area of the North. Furthermore, the

African students have formed an organization on the SDSU campus which provides support to members; Asian students do not have such a support group on this campus. Both of these factors may be related to differences in adjustment observed in this study in contrast to those in Shepard's study.

Interpreting the findings of Table 18 in terms of race, that is, looking at the relationships between adjustment and race (black vs. non-black), it would indicate that blacks had a better adjustment than nonblacks, as it can be seen in Table 19. This would be expected from the observations on adjustment and geographic origin.

Table 19
Race and Adjustment

Race	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Black	(3) 11.1	(14) 51.9	(10) 37
Non-black	(16) 20.3	(45) 57	(18) 22.7

$$\chi^2 = 2.64$$

$$df = 2$$

Table 19 shows that less blacks (11.1 percent) had difficulty adjusting than non-blacks (20.3 percent) and more blacks (37 percent) had high adjustment compared with non-blacks (22.7 percent). This difference, however, did not achieve statistical significance.

Academic Status. Table 20 shows the relationships between adjustment and academic status of foreign students involved in the study.

Table 20
Academic Status and Adjustment

Academic Status	Adjustment					
	Low		Medium		High	
Undergraduate	(15)	23.1	(40)	61.5	(10)	15.4
Graduate	(4)	9.8	(19)	46.3	(18)	43.9

$$\chi^2 = 11.27$$

$$df = 2$$

Table 20 indicates that graduate students have a better adjustment than do undergraduates, and these differences are statistically significant (.003). Only 9.8 percent of graduates reported having low adjustment comparing to 23.1 percent of undergraduates. On the other hand, 43.9 percent of graduates reported having high adjustment comparing to 15.4 percent of undergraduates. Although the better adjustment of foreign graduate students (in contrast to foreign undergraduate students) might be related to their longer sojourn in the U.S. and/or the fact that they are generally older than the undergraduates, neither of these variables (length of time in the U.S. nor age) were found to be significantly related to adjustment. Still another possible explanation (for which data are not available in this study) might be that these students are more specialized in their interests and have a greater sense of purpose in their studies here. These are possibilities which might be examined in future studies. The findings of this study on this issue seem to contradict those of Selltitz et al (1963:92) who found

that "undergraduates scored higher than graduate students on the summary interaction index and on the sub-index of intimacy of activities." The apparent contradiction between this study and that of Selltitz may be due to differences in the measurement of adjustment, and/or it may be due to the size of the sample.

Major of Study. It might be assumed that there would be a difference in adjustment of students based on their field of study. That is to say that those who are in the social sciences, due to the nature of these sciences, tend to interact more with Americans. In this regard, fields like engineering, mathematics, biological and agricultural sciences, and the like were categorized as "Natural Sciences and Engineering" and fields such as humanities, social sciences, arts, and the like were categorized as "Social Sciences and Humanities." Each of these fields were not considered individually because of the small number of students that are in some fields, which would endanger the reliability of the results. Table 21 shows the relationships between field of study and ease of adjustment.

Table 21 indicates that no real differences exist. That is, about 18.5 percent of students in natural sciences and engineering reported having low adjustment, which the percentage of those from social sciences and

Table 21
Field of Study and Adjustment

Field of Study	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Natural Sciences & Engineering	(17) 18.5	(52) 56.5	(23) 25
Social Sciences & Humanities	(2) 16.7	(7) 58.3	(3) 25

$$\chi^2 = .025$$

$$df = 2$$

humanities is 16.7. It also indicates that more students from social sciences and humanities (58.3 percent) reported having medium adjustment as compared to 56.5 percent of those in the natural sciences and engineering. The percentage of those who reported having high adjustment was the same (25 percent) for both groups. A strong case cannot be made with regard to adjustment based on field of study because the differences are very small and also because the number of students in social sciences and humanities are relatively small.

Summary - The Adjustment of International Students

Of all of the variables examined in relation to the adjustment of international students at SDSU, only one was found to reveal significant differences in adjustment - that one was the academic status of the students as either undergraduate or graduate students. Graduate students revealed significantly (.003) better levels of adjustment than did the undergraduates. Since neither age

nor length of time in the U.S. were significantly related to adjustment, it is somewhat difficult to interpret this finding on academic status. Perhaps, it is not so much a matter of maturity (as should be reflected in age) but a sense of purpose that makes for this difference for graduate students.

D. Relative Importance of Different Variables

The second objective of the study was also to determine the relative importance of different variables in relation to adjustment. Table 22 shows different variables and their relative Spearman's rho values which served as an indication of the correlation between the variables and adjustment.

Table 22
Relative Importance of Different
Variables with Regard to Adjustment

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Spearman's rho</u>
Academic status	.312
SES background	.240
Sex	.177
Parental Residence	.170
Age	.146

Table 22 indicates that academic status (graduate vs. undergraduate) was the variable with the highest correlation with adjustment. It was also the only variable to reveal statistically significant differences in adjustment. Sex of the respondents, parental residence, and the age of the respondents were less

closely related to adjustment. All other variables considered in relation to adjustment were either not related or very weakly related (i.e., less than the .146 indicated for age).

These findings indicate that demographic variables are more closely related to the adjustment of foreign students than are some of the experiential variables previously suggested by the literature. Although the correlations are by no means sizable, the relative importance of SES background, sex, and parental residence do lend support to the idea that differential socialization contributes to differences in foreign student adjustment. The still stronger correlation of academic status and adjustment is more difficult to interpret in terms of the theoretical framework employed in this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study was an exploratory study which attempted to determine some of the factors involved in the adjustment of foreign students. It was found that, indeed, many factors with different degrees of importance, are involved. It was found that the academic status of the student was the most important factor influencing one's adjustment. Other factors such as the student's SES background, sex, marital status, were also related to adjustment, but not closely.

Some of the findings of this study question the generalizability of some of the premises of socialization theory. For example anticipatory socialization suggests that by informing a person of his/her future roles, role transitions are made easier for the individual (see page 18). This study did not find significant differences of adjustment between those with prior cross-cultural experience and those without it (see Table 13).

However, some of the findings of this study were supportive of some of the aspects of socialization theory. Some of the meaningful variables associated with adjustment (in terms of Spearman rho correlations) were SES background, sex, and parental residence. In relation to

each of these variables, it was suggested that differential socialization occurs - i.e., middle class children are socialized differently than working class children; females are socialized differently than are males; and socialization in rural localities is different from that of urban localities. While statistically significant differences were not realized in this study, this may have been due to sample size (particularly few representing higher SES categories, females, and rural origins). As a consequence, it does not seem advisable to completely dismiss socialization theory as irrelevant to understanding foreign student adjustment.

This study revealed that foreign students coming to the U.S. to study need to know much more than is presently the case. The findings suggest that students experience difficulties especially in relation to personal relationships (male-female relations and family relationships) as well as in values, customs, and habits.

Students also indicated that the opportunities to get to know Americans are not enough. More programs which assist foreign students in meeting and/or working with Americans are necessary. It should be noted that foreign students perceive Americans in this area as "closed" or reserved in relation to foreigners. Strategies need to be developed to overcome this barrier.

The students in this study did not see the language to be a major obstacle in adjustment for them. It is suggested that future studies on this subject should obtain some objective measure of English language skill (such as TOEFL score) and examine this in relation to adjustment.

Summary.

There were some cultural and social differences that were observed by relatively large number of foreign students. These differences included: male-female relationships, family relationships, individualism, and American habits. In general, it was found that foreign students thought that: the society is more open and less restrictive here; females are more liberated; and individuals enjoy more freedom and individuality here.

It was observed that the adjustment of foreign students differed on the bases on many variables, and that some have an easier time adjusting than others. Table 23 shows some of the variables related to differential adjustment of foreign students.

Based upon Spearman rho values, it was found that the most important factor influencing adjustment was the academic status (graduate vs. undergraduate) of the student. The second important factor was the student's SES background. Sex was also a relatively more important influence on the adjustment of foreign students.

Table 23
Variables Related to Differential Adjustment

Factor	Adjustment		
	Low	Medium	High
Sex (n.s.)			
Male	(18) 20.2	(50) 56.2	(21) 23.6
Female	(1) 5.9	(9) 52.9	(7) 41.2
Major (n.s.)			
Natural Sciences & Engineering	(17) 18.5	(52) 56.5	(23) 25
Social Sciences			
Humanities	(2) 16.7	(7) 58.3	(3) 25
Academic status (.003)			
Undergraduate	(15) 23.1	(40) 61.5	(10) 15.4
Graduate	(4) 9.8	(19) 46.3	(18) 43.9
Age (n.s.)			
18-22	(8) 24.2	(19) 56.5	(6) 18.2
23-30	(9) 15.5	(32) 55.2	(17) 29.3
31-over	(2) 13.3	(8) 53.3	(5) 33.3
Marital status (n.s.)			
Single	(14) 19.2	(38) 52.1	(21) 28.2
Married	(5) 15.6	(20) 62.5	(7) 21.9
Time in U.S. (n.s.)			
1 or 2 years	(7) 16.7	(25) 59.5	(10) 23.8
3 or 4 years	(9) 19.6	(27) 58.7	(10) 21.7
5 or more	(3) 16.7	(7) 38.9	(8) 44.4
Geographic Origin (n.s.)			
Africa	(3) 11.1	(14) 51.9	(10) 37
Asia	(16) 21.9	(43) 58.9	(14) 19.2
Latin America	(0) 0	(0) 0	(2) 100
S. Europe	(0) 0	(2) 50	(2) 50
Level of SES (n.s.)			
Low	(3) 11.1	(13) 48.1	(11) 40.7
Medium	(13) 18.6	(40) 57.1	(17) 24.3
High	(3) 33.3	(6) 66.7	(0) 0
Prior cross-cultural exp. (n.s.)			
Yes	(11) 16.9	(37) 56.9	(17) 26.2
No	(8) 20	(21) 52.5	(11) 27.5
Parental Residence (n.s.)			
Urban	(13) 15.1	(48) 55.8	(25) 29.1
Rural	(6) 30	(11) 55	(3) 15

Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations:

1. The population under study was foreign students from developing countries; therefore students from more developed countries (Canada, Japan,...) were excluded. Furthermore, there were some less developed countries like Venezuela which were represented in the foreign student population at the national level but were not represented in the SDSU population. This would limit the generalizability of the conclusions of the study to a limited portion of the foreign student population.

2. Since males, students in the Natural Sciences and Engineering, and single students were most numerous in this sample; this fact might prejudice the conclusions reached. That is, real differences in adjustment between males and females, students with different majors, and single and married students may not have been observed because of the few females, Social Science and Humanities students, and married students. Future research will need to obtain samples including more such students.

3. Since the measurement used in this study was ordinal, non-parametric statistics were employed. If ratio or interval scales were used, stronger, more sophisticated statistical techniques could be applied.

4. Since the sample used in this study was small, some statistical analyses were not possible.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Since this study was part of a larger study, only the questions relevant to this study are included in the appendix.

International Student Survey

1. Home Country _____
2. Sex: (1) Male _____ (2) Female _____
3. Major _____
4. (1) Undergraduate _____ (2) Graduate (Masters) _____
(3) Graduate (PhD) _____ (4) Special _____
5. Age: (1) 18-22 _____
(2) 23-25 _____
(3) 26-30 _____
(4) 31-35 _____
(5) 36 or over _____
6. Marital Status: (1) Single _____
(2) Married _____

If married, is your spouse here in:
(3) The U.S.? _____
(4) Brookings? _____
7. How long have you lived in the U.S. _____
How long have you lived in Brookings? _____
8. Have you had other cross-cultural experiences outside of your home country?
(1) Yes _____ (2) No _____
9. Which of the following categories best describes your father's level of education?
(1) Secondary or less _____ (2) College _____
(3) Graduate or professional _____
10. Which of the following categories best describes your mother's level of education?
(1) Secondary or less _____ (2) College _____
(2) Graduate or professional _____

11. What category best describes your father's occupation?
(If your father is retired or deceased, which describes his occupation before retirement or before he died.)

- (1) Manual laborer _____
- (2) Farmer _____
- (3) Manager _____
- (4) Owner of business _____
- (5) Professional _____
- (6) Government ministries _____

12. What category best describes your mother's occupation?
(If retired or deceased, describe her occupation before that time.)

- (1) Manual laborer _____
- (2) Farmer _____
- (3) Manager _____
- (4) Owner of business _____
- (5) Professional _____
- (6) Government ministries _____

13. How is your education here being funded?

- (1) Private resources _____
 - (2) Scholarship _____
If scholarship, what kind? _____
- _____

14. Why did you select SDSU for your studies?

- (1) Because it has the field of study that you wanted _____
 - (2) Because family or friends had studied here _____
 - (3) Because it is less expensive than other places _____
 - (4) Other. What? _____
- _____
- _____

15. About what size is the place where your parents live (or the place that you consider "home" if your parents are now deceased)?

- (1) Large urban area _____
 - (2) Small urban area _____
 - (3) Rural village _____
 - (4) Farm _____
 - (5) Other (if none of the above are appropriate).
What?
-
-

CARD 2 (IBM)

10. Educational systems vary from one part of the world and from one country to another. In what way or ways did your educational system (before SDSU) differ from what you find here at SDSU?

- (1) Other system more applied _____
 - (2) Other system more theoretical _____
 - (3) Other system had different testing _____
 - (4) Other system had different grading _____
 - (5) Other difference. What? _____
-
-

11-12 Why did you choose to come to the U.S. (rather than remain in your home country or rather than going to some other country) to study?

13. How would you describe your experiences with SDSU staff (especially teachers)?
- (1) Very good, positive experiences _____
 - (2) Good, generally positive experiences _____
 - (3) Some good, some bad experiences _____
 - (4) Bad, generally negative experiences _____
 - (5) Very bad, negative experiences _____
14. How would you describe your experiences with SDSU (American) students?
- (1) Very good, positive experiences _____
 - (2) Good, generally positive experiences _____
 - (3) Some good, some bad experiences _____
 - (4) Bad, generally negative experiences _____
 - (5) Very bad, negative experiences _____
15. What kinds of adjustment to SDSU have been most difficult for you?
- (1) Academic _____
 - (2) Social _____
 - (3) Other. What? _____

- 16-17. What has been most helpful to you in adjusting to school and life at SDSU?
- (1) Other students from your country _____
 - (2) Other international students (not from your country) _____
 - (3) Orientation program, advisor, faculty _____
 - (4) Host family _____
 - (5) American students _____

18. To what extent do you think that your language skills have been an obstacle to your adjustment here?
- (1) Major obstacle _____ (3) Very little obstacle _____
(2) Somewhat an obstacle _____ (4) No obstacle at all _____
19. How would you rate your level of knowledge about U.S. culture and lifestyles before coming to the U.S.?
- (1) Great deal of knowledge _____
(2) Some knowledge _____
(3) Little knowledge _____
(4) No or almost no knowledge _____
20. Think about the people here at SDSU whom you regard as your friends. About what percent of your friends are:
- (1) Americans _____
(2) From your own country _____
(3) Internationals not from your own country _____
21. How much opportunity do you feel that international students have for getting to know American students?
- (1) Great deal of opportunity _____
(2) Some opportunity _____
(3) Little opportunity _____
(4) No opportunity _____
22. How much opportunity do you feel that you have to share your culture with others who are not from your country?
- (1) Great deal of opportunity _____
(2) Some opportunity _____
(3) Little opportunity _____
(4) No opportunity _____

23. How would you rate your experiences with the people of Brookings?

- (1) Very good, positive _____
- (2) Good, generally positive _____
- (3) Some good, some bad _____
- (4) Very bad, negative _____
- (5) Very bad, negative _____
- (6) No experiences with the people of Brookings _____

24.-25. Have you encountered any major cultural barriers or differences between your own country and the U.S.?

- (1) No _____
- (2) Yes _____

If yes, what were these?

26-27. If yes (Major cultural barriers or differences), how did you deal with them?

- (1) No barriers or differences encountered _____

28-29. Have you ever lived in any other U.S. city besides Brookings?

(1) No _____

(2) Yes _____ If yes, which city or cities?

30. If yes, how would you compare your experiences in that city (cities) with your experiences in Brookings?

(1) No other experiences _____

(2) More positive in other city _____

(3) About the same as in Brookings _____

(4) More negative in other city _____

31. How would you compare the ease or difficulty of adjusting to life at SDSU for males and for females from your country? (If there are no females or males from your country at SDSU, how would you expect their adjustment to compare if they were to come?)

(1) Easier for males _____

(2) Easier for females _____

(3) About the same for both _____

To what extent have any of the following experiences been difficult for you since coming to SDSU?

32. Separation from your family:

(1) Very difficult _____

(2) Somewhat difficult _____

(3) Not at all difficult _____

33. Homesickness:

- (1) Very difficult _____
- (2) Somewhat difficult _____
- (3) Not at all difficult _____

34. Loneliness:

- (1) Very difficult _____
- (2) Somewhat difficult _____
- (3) Not at all difficult _____

35. Before coming to SDSU, did you participate in any kind of orientation program to prepare you for life in the U.S. or at SDSU?

- (1) Yes, in your own country _____
- (2) Yes, in Washington, D.C. _____
- (3) Yes, elsewhere in the U.S. _____
- (4) No _____

36. How helpful or useful did you find that orientation program to be (if you participated in one)?

- (1) Very helpful _____
- (2) Somewhat helpful _____
- (3) Little or no help _____
- (4) Did not participate in one _____

37-38. Based upon your experiences, what do you think an orientation program for international students should include?

39. How useful or beneficial do you find the host family program at SDSU to be?

- (1) Very useful _____ (3) Not very useful _____
(2) Somewhat useful _____ (4) Not at all useful _____

40-41. Think about the time when you complete your studies here at SDSU.

When you return to your home country, what kinds of adjustment do you think that you will probably have to make?

42-44. How much opportunity have you had while at SDSU to:

42. Visit your home country?

- (1) Much opportunity _____
(2) Some opportunity _____
(3) No opportunity _____

43. Communicate with students from your country?

- (1) Much opportunity _____
(2) Some opportunity _____
(3) No opportunity _____

44. Maintain contact with people at home (in your country)?

- (1) Much opportunity _____
(2) Some opportunity _____
(3) No opportunity _____